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DISCIPLES WOMEN OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST)

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STAFF

Rev. Dr. Patricia A. Donahoo, Executive Director

Rev. Chesla Nickelson, Program Director and Merger Staff

Regenia Smith, Ministry Associate

Lisa Hubbard, Ministry Associate

General Board Report on 2020

Disciples Women's Ministries is a conduit for diverse connections empowering each woman to find her voice and live out her call. Micah 6:8

Disciples Women are networking women across the US and Canada working with existing groups and women who want to establish groups for study, spiritual growth, leadership development, mission and other common needs. The program staff keynote, preach, lead workshops, lead international journeys, march, serve with, and/or gather in conversation with regional women's groups, justice groups, congregations general ministry partners, general cabinets, interregionals, trainings, Obra Hispana assembly, NAPAD assembly, National Convocation Assembly, regional assemblies and observances, ecumenical colleagues, Christian Theological Seminary, etc.

We continue in close covenant with DHM and continue in anti-racism/pro-reconciliation efforts and training. We have a healthy partnership with HELM in sharing Lisa Hubbard as a Ministry Associate to provide full-time employment for her while handling both of our support needs.

In partnership with Global Ministries, the Woman-to-Woman Worldwide (W2WW) program facilitates journeys to visit our global partners each year. Together we prepare delegations for what they will encounter during journeys through study, training, and conversation. Our journeys for 2020 and 2021 had to be cancelled due to the dangers of COVID spread. The members of the delegations share what they have learned when they return and encourage others to work with them to support at least one of the programs they have observed during their journey.

In partnership with Christian Church Foundation, we supported new legislation that will empower victims of human trafficking. Disciples Women in the US and Canada continue

to work to end human trafficking and reduce vulnerabilities of women and girls that put them at higher risk.

Just Women, the designated resource for Disciples Women, publishes the Bible study annually. The theme for 2021 is “Power and Possibilities” which seems to have been well-timed to encourage readers to be hopeful and inspired as we continue to face the challenges of dealing with multiple pandemics. We publish weekly “Monday Moments” which are thoughts and inspirations written by the IDWM Executive Committee, Staff, and other women who have been asked to share.

Because of generous donors to the Disciples Women Endowment Fund we offer grants twice a year for new and creative ministries by Disciples Women for the benefit of Disciples Women. This is an opportunity to support innovative ideas that need a bit of seed money to begin or to support those serving in new ways that benefit women’s ministries. While some recipients have not been able to complete the Disciples Women Endowment Fund projects they had received grants for, others have been creative in finding ways to redesign their projects. We continue to receive requests for our continued consideration of grants. The Executive Committee had already been meeting in person only once a year and holding other meetings online, we have since moved all meetings to online.

Each year Disciples Women participate in a service project. Given the struggles and inequities that have become clearer during these pandemics, 2021 will focus on food insecurity in local areas wherever women are gathered.

While working remotely and being restricted from travel has imposed many challenges, it has also provided unexpected opportunities. I have participated in multiple women’s and regional events using zoom and GoToMeeting. Using this technology, I can attend multiple events on one weekend. We have increased our use of videos as well to be used in a variety of venues where we cannot be present. While many people have been thrown into a digital world they were unfamiliar with, they have gained knowledge and skills that will allow us to be ‘present’ more often and more cost effectively. While we have been working remotely, we have found that there is no shortage of work and we are more available to women everywhere. We continue to remind staff that the need for self-care and grace is real with all that each one is dealing with. This is a difficult change in our ‘normal’.

I am working with NBA to train and facilitate Appreciative Inquiry with their leaders. We have had some time of education and debriefing and they are working on putting together a plan to move the information they have gathered forward. I had studied this during my doctoral work and used it at the last church I served so had the opportunity to share that experience with them.

Chesla Nickelson, program director and merger staff, continued to update and improve the Leader Apprentice Program (LAP) to continue to provide leadership training for women of color. She has outlined a new resource to teach similar leadership skills to young women of junior and high school age. She and our ministry associates, Regenia Smith and Lisa Hubbard, have taken on a huge amount of work to reduce costs and still

produce the Bible study we provide. Rev. Nickelson has resigned her position as of the end of January 2021 to pursue counseling and sexuality education as spiritual development. We are grateful for her work and ministry for the past 6 ½ years and know that she will continue to bless all those she ministers to and with.

I recommended, and it was accepted, that I retire early to allow the opportunity to call a new Executive Director with a rewritten position description and understanding that priorities will need to be set since there is an expected reduction of hours for program staff. We were struggling to meet our budget prior to the pandemic and funding continued to decrease in 2020. Some difficult and quick decisions were required. The committee will be meeting with the National Convocation and DHM to talk about possible changes to the duties of the Program Director/Merger Staff. Our IDWM president, Wanona Rogers Redd, has taken on a lot of work to seek and call new candidates to these positions.

I appreciate this board and my colleagues and the encouragement and support in the big changes that are happening with the ministry and with me personally. I am blessed to have had the opportunity to be part of this ministry for that last ten years. I have received more love and care than I could possibly have imagined. I have built strong and diverse relationships across DOC women in the United States and Canada as well as women around the globe. I do not have a clear direction on what is next but I trust God will continue to lead me into exciting and rewarding ministry that allows me to live out my call. Before my exit, I will observe the 20th anniversary of my ordination. Over half of this time has been spent with Disciples Women. I am blessed and I am grateful.

Respectfully,

Pat Donahoo

Patricia A. Donahoo
Executive Director, Disciples Women

IDWM Executive Committee

Rev. Marilyn Williams, President
Wanona Rogers Redd, President Elect
Tanya Lopez, Hispanic Women's Representative
Soo Yun, NAPAD Women's Representative
Claudette President, National Convocation Women's Representative
Rev. Sheila Spencer, DHM Representative
Rev. Dr. Christal Williams, Regional IDWM Staff Representative
Wende Bristow Barrett, Regional President Representative
Alishah Hardway, Member-at-Large
Renee White, Member-at-Large
Tera Daniels, Member-at-Large

Rev. Dr. Pat Donahoo, Secretary/Staff
Rev. Chesla Nickelson, Staff